

STARING WEI JIE TO DEATH (2017)

PARA ORCHESTRA

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(1987-)

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**Tōru Takemitsu Composition Award: First
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Biography

Paulo Brito is a Brazilian-American composer and pianist. First-Prize Winner of the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award (Japan)—awarded by world-renowned composer Unsuk Chin, Brito has been featured at international venues including the Royaumont Festival’s “Voix Nouvelles” Academy, Shanghai Conservatory New Music Week, and University of Toronto New Music Festival. His music has been performed by prominent artists including conductor Jean-Philippe Wurtz and the Ensemble Linéa (France), Japanese Noh singer Ryoko Aoki, conductor Yoichi Sugiyama and the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra.

Bruto’s music draws upon influences ranging from Western opera to East Asian music drama, reflecting his cross-cultural interest in multidisciplinary performance and in creating experimental, integrative pieces that dramatize the concert setting. Brito has studied with eminent composers including Toshio Hosokawa, Anthony Cheung and Christos Hatzis. Currently completing his doctorate at the University of Toronto, he previously studied comparative literature at the University of Chicago (M.A. 2016) and Classics at Columbia University (B.A. 2013).

Abstract

Staring Wei Jie to Death uses the notion of evocation to give musical form to a peculiar story from ancient China. Wei Jie is a historical figure who served as a court official under the Jin dynasty during the late 3rd to early 4th centuries C.E. The Book of Jin relates that he was legendary even in his own time for his astonishing physical beauty, and that it proved to be the cause of his death. For when the Jin empire was threatened by barbarian invaders, Wei Jie fled south, to the city known today as Nanjing; there, people were so eager to catch a glimpse of his unearthly beauty that a crowd gathered to see him arrive. But Wei Jie, frail in health, could not withstand the force of their collective gaze, and thus, the story goes, he was stared to death. Rather than narrating events in a linear or programmatic fashion, *Staring Wei Jie to Death* instead takes certain aural “cues” from the ancient text and calls upon the orchestra to evoke the textual narrative by giving sound to key elements associated with it. Each of the work’s four sections is constructed around one of these elements, moving from sonically “concrete” to “abstract”: the ringing of jade in “The Man of Jade” (jade being a Chinese metaphor for beauty), the din of battle in “Great Chaos under Heaven,” the remote splendor of “Ancient Nanjing,” and finally, the consuming power of the gaze in “Staring Wei Jie to Death.”

PAULO BRITO

看 杀 卫 玠

[Kan Sha Wei Jie]

STARING WEI JIE TO DEATH

SYMPHONIC EVOCATION

BASED ON AN EPISODE FROM CHINESE ANTIQUITY

FOR ORCHESTRA

2017

Background

The story of Wei Jie (286-312 C.E.), though extant in several ancient Chinese sources, comes primarily from the Book of Jin, the annals of the Jin dynasty (265-410 C.E.). Wei Jie came from a prominent family of the ruling class, and himself served as an official at the imperial court. In his time, he was renowned for his oratory and rhetorical skill, but the source of his posthumous fame is rather different – his physical beauty, and the way it is supposed, according to the chronicle, to have caused his death. For while he was still a young man, China was thrown into turmoil by an invasion of barbarians. As the invaders moved in on the imperial capital, Wei Jie fled with his family southward, seeking the relative safety of the city known today as Nanjing. By the time he arrived there, word of his unearthly beauty had spread, so that all the townspeople had gathered to see him. Wei Jie, frail of health since childhood, did not have the strength to withstand the gaze of so many eyes upon him at once; thus, the legend goes, he was stared to death.

Instrumentation

2 Flutes (2nd doubling piccolo)
2 Oboes (2nd doubling cor anglais)
2 Clarinets (2nd doubling bass clarinet)
2 Bassoons (2nd doubling contrabassoon)

2 Horns
2 Trumpets in C
2 Trombones

Timpani

Percussion – 3 players:

- Triangle, Snare drum, Glockenspiel
- Tubular bells, Xylophone
- Bass drum, Vibraphone

Celesta
Harp
Piano

8 First violins
8 Second violins
6 Violas
4 Cellos
2 Contrabasses

Indications

- The score is “in C”: all instruments sound at the written pitch, except: piccolo, xylophone and celesta sound an octave higher, contrabassoon and contrabasses sound an octave lower (glockenspiel sounds two octaves higher).
- Accidentals are valid for a single pitch for the duration of the measure, and are maintained when tied over to the next measure (occasionally an accidental is repeated within the measure to avoid any ambiguity).
- The indication *con sord.* in the brass parts always means the straight mute.
- String sections always divide evenly (unless specifically indicated otherwise).
- Four-string contrabasses with a C-extension capable of tuning the open fourth string to the pitches between the low C and E are required.
- The four movements of the work are to be played continuously.
- Total performance time is approximately 10 minutes.

THE MAN OF JADE

玉人

Etereo tintinnante ♩ = 60

2 (4) 5 (2+1) 2 5 2 5 2 5

4 (8) 8 (4+8) 4 8 4 8 4 8

1

1

Flauti

2

Ottavino

pp

1

Oboi

pp

2

pp

Triangolo

ppp (l.v.)

Xilofono

pp

Vibrafono

pp delicato vel. p

Celesta

pp delicato

Arpa

pp delicato vel. 8va

Piano

pp delicato 8va

Ped

This musical score is for the piece 'L'Espresso' by Luciano Berio. It is a full orchestral score with various instruments. The score is written in 2/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'.

The instruments included are:

- Ottavino
- Oboi (1 and 2)
- Clarinetti (1 and 2)
- Corni (1 and 2)
- Triangolo
- Xilofono
- Vibrafono
- Celesta
- Arpa
- Piano
- Violini I (1 and 2)

The score features a variety of musical notations, including dynamics (pp, f, mp, mf, sf), articulation (pizz., arco con sord.), and performance instructions (muta in Cor. inglese, muta in Clar. basso). The score is divided into measures, with some measures containing multiple staves for different instruments.

[illegible]

[illegible]

4

a tempo

24

5

4

a tempo

24

6

[illegible]

II

GREAT CHAOS UNDER HEAVEN

天下大亂

[illegible]

53

1 Flauti

2 Flauti

1 Oboi

2 Oboi

Clarinetto basso

1 Fagotti

2 Fagotti (muta in Controfagotto)

1 Corni

2 Corni

1 Trombe

2 Trombe

1 Tromboni

2 Tromboni

Timpani

Gran cassa

Rullante

Piano

ff

Flauto

ff

ff

ff

f marcatisissimo

f marcatisissimo

ff

ff

l.v.

f

f

con forza 6

sf

lasciar vibrare

ff

vel.

56

Flauti

2 (muta in Ottavino)

Oboi

1 *ff* 6

2 *tr* (muta in Clarinetto)

Clarinetto basso

1 *ff*

Corni

1 *tr* *ff*

2 *tr* *ff* 6

Trombe

1 *con sord.*

2 *con sord.*

Tromboni

1 *con sord.*

2 *con sord.*

Timpani

ff 6 *vel*

Rullante

ff *tr* *ff*

Xilofono

Piano

Violini I

Violini II

Viole

Violoncelli

1 *arco* *ff* 3

2 *arco* *ff* 3

Contrabbassi

1 *arco* *ff* 3

2 *arco* *ff* 3

[illegible]

The image shows a page of a musical score, likely for a symphony, featuring various instruments. The score is written in Italian and includes musical notation, dynamics, and performance instructions.

Instruments and Parts:

- Flauti (Flutes):** 1 and 2 parts, marked *f marcatisissimo*.
- Oboi (Oboes):** 1 and 2 parts, marked *ff*.
- Clarinetti (Clarinets):** 1 and 2 parts, marked *ff*.
- Fagotti (Bassoons):** 1 and 2 parts, marked *ff*. The 2nd part has a note marked "(muta in Fagotto)".
- Corni (Horns):** 1 and 2 parts, marked *f marcatisissimo*.
- Tromboni (Trombones):** 1 and 2 parts, marked *marcatissimo*.
- Timpani (Timpani):** Marked *tr* (trill) and *f*.
- Xilofono (Xylophone):** Marked *f senza pedale*.
- Vibrafono (Vibraphone):** Marked *f senza pedale*.
- Piano:** Marked *ff*.
- Violini I (Violins I):** 1 and 2 parts, marked *f marcatisissimo*.
- Violini II (Violins II):** 1 and 2 parts, marked *ff*.
- Viole (Violas):** 1 and 2 parts, marked *marcatissimo*.
- Violoncelli (Violoncellos):** 1 and 2 parts, marked *marcatissimo*.
- Contrabbassi (Double Basses):** 1 and 2 parts, marked *ff*.

Performance Instructions:

- ormai più sfrenato* (now more unrestrained) appears at the top right and bottom right of the page.
- secco* (dry) is marked in the Piano part.
- col legno* (with wood) is marked for the Violins and Violas.
- ord.* (order) is marked for the Violins and Violas.
- pizz.* (pizzicato) is marked for the Violoncelli.
- arco* (arco) is marked for the Violoncelli.

Rehearsal Markers:

- Rehearsal mark 7 is indicated at the top left and bottom left of the page.

66

Flauti

Oboi

Clarinetti

Corni

Trombe

Tromboni

Timpani

Gran cassa

Rullante

Xilofono

Vibrafono

Piano

Violini I

Violini II

Viole

Violoncelli

tr

vel.

ff

ff (senza pedale sempre)

fff con furia

arco al tallone

con forza

tr

mf

arco al tallone

mf

8

The musical score consists of the following parts:

- Corno inglese
- Clarinetto basso
- Fagotto (1 and 2)
- Corni (1 and 2)
- Timpani
- Campane
- Xilofono
- Vibrafono
- Piano
- Viole
- Violoncelli (1 and 2)
- Contrabbassi

Measure numbers are indicated at the top of each system.

[illegible]

III

ANCIENT NANJING

建鄴

4/4 **Maestoso ma tranquillo, quasi solenne** ♩ = 50

Piano

76

f

l.v. sempre

più f

pp delicatissimo

4/4 **Maestoso ma tranquillo, quasi solenne** ♩ = 50

Violini I

1

pp

sul tasto
sul II

2

pp

p

sf

pp

tr

pp

pp

cresc.

con brio

sfpp

lasciar vibrare

9

9

pp

cresc.

con brio

sfpp

tr

p

3

tr

p

3

Violoncelli

1

2

Contrabbassi

1

2

[illegible]

10 tempo

17

90

1

Flauti

ff

(muta in Ottavino)

2

ff

1

Oboi

ff

(muta in Corno inglese)

2

ff

1

Clarineti

ff

(muta in Clarinetto basso)

2

ff

Clarinetto basso

3

p

1

Trombe

ff

2

ff

Timpani

ff

l.v.

Xilofono

ff

Vibrafono

ff

l.v.

Arpa

ff

l.v.

l.v.

l.v.

p

Piano

ff

pesante, sonore

3

secco

3

*

10 tempo

Violini II

ff

Viole

ff

arco

sf

pizz.

arco

3

p

Violoncelli

ff

Contrabbassi

ff

93

(muta in Clarinetto)

11

Clarinetto basso

sfp

Timpani

ff con forza poco vel.

poco decresc.

f

Xilofono

ff con forza

poco decresc.

f

Vibrafono

ff con forza senza pedale

poco decresc.

f col pedale, molto vibrato

Arpa

f

l.v.

Piano

fff potente

Violini I

11

f

ff

pizz.

poco decresc.

f

Violini II

1

arco

pp

cresc. molto

ff

dim. molto

pp

2

arco

pp

cresc. molto

ff

dim. molto

pp

Viola

sfp

cresc. molto

ff

dim molto

pp

Violoncelli

arco

f

ff

poco decresc.

f

sul pont.

Contrabbassi

ff con forza

poco decresc.

f

arco

[illegible]

98

12

Flauti

1

2

pp

(muta in Ottavino)

3

Clarineti

1

2

pp

tr

3

(muta in Clar. basso)

Clarinetto basso

pp

Timpani

Vibrafono

pp

3

dolce

l.v.

Celesta

pp

Arpa

pp

dolce

3

Piano

pp

sostenuto

8va

Violini I

pp

arco sul II

tr

3

12

Violoncelli

pp

3

101

Flauti

Ottavino

pp p mf pp

Oboi

p dolce

Corno inglese

p dolce

pp

Clarinetto basso

(ord.)

ppp p mf pp

Fagotti

p dolce

pp dolce

Timpani

tr

ppp p mf pp

Celesta

p mf pp

Arpa

ppp p secco mf pp secco

p

Piano

pp

Violini II

sul tasto al fine sul IV

pp

pppp

Viole

sul tasto al fine sul III

pppp

Violoncelli

1 solo pizz. con sord. pp

2 solo pizz. con sord. pp

Contrabbassi

1 pizz. con sord. pp

2 pizz. con sord. pp

22

看殺衛玠

111

13 9 8 L. = 58 tranquillo

Flauti

Oboi

Clarinetti

Fagotti

Corni

Timpani

Vibrafono

Violini I

Violini II

Viole

Violoncelli

Contrabbassi

Flauto

Corno inglese

Clarinetto basso

tr

l.v.

col legno tratto

ord.

con sord. sul tasto

via sord.

p

mp

pp

ppp

mf

122

15

$\frac{4}{4}$ = 63 molto con mistero ma anche dolcezza

Timpani

Glockenspiel

Xilofono

Vibrafono

Celesta

Arpa

Piano

Violoncelli

Contrabbassi

129

16

$\frac{6}{4}$ molto quieto

$\frac{5}{4}$

$\frac{6}{4}$

$\frac{2}{4}$

Timpani

Celesta

Arpa

Piano

Violoncelli

Contrabbassi

26

17

4

4

morbidissimo

5

4

4

4

5

4

6

4

134

1

Flauti

pp

ppp

(muta in Ottavino)

2

Flauti

pp

1

Oboi

pp

(Corno inglese)

2

Oboi

pp

pp

1

Clarineti

pp

(Clarinetto basso)

2

Clarineti

1

Corni

2

Corni

Xilofono

Vibrafono

f sf

sf

sf

sf

sf

ppp col pedale

Celesta

pp

Arpa

pp presso la tavola

ppp (ord.)

Piano

f sf secco

sf simile

sf

sf

17

4

4

morbidissimo

5

4

4

4

5

4

6

4

2 soli

pp

Violini I

pp

gli altri

pizz.

div. con sord.

f sf

sf

sf

sf

2 sole

pp

Viola

pp

le altre

pizz.

solo arco con sord.

f sf

sf

sf

sf

Violoncelli

1

ppp

2

Violoncelli

pp

ppp

Contrabbassi

1

pp

ppp

2

Contrabbassi

pp

ppp

suoni reali

18

4/4

27

Flauti
1 *mp* 3 Ottavino (muta in Flauto)
2 *mp* 3

Oboi
1 *pp*
2 (Corno inglese) *pp*

Clarinetti
1
2 (Clar. basso) *mp* *mf*

Fagotti
1 *pp*
2 *pp*

Corni
1 *pp*
2 *pp*

Tromboni
1
2

Timpani
f

Celesta
p

Arpa
mp *mf*

Violini I
18 *p* tutti unisono arco via sord. *mp* col legno

Violini II
via sord. (ord.) *pp* poco a poco cresc. *p* *f* *ff*

Viole
tutte unisono arco via sord. *pp* poco a poco cresc. *p* *f* *ff*

Violoncelli
tutti via sord. *p* col legno *mp*

Contrabbassi
via sord. col legno *mf* pizz.

deciso

Paulo do Nascimento Brito 33

$\text{♩} = 58$ 20 *con massima debolezza* 29

145

Oboi

1 p *dim.* pp ppp

2 (Corno ingl.) pp ppp

Clarineti

1 p *dim.* (pp)

2 p *dim.* (pp)

Fagotti

1 p *dim.* pp ppp

2 pp ppp

Corni

1 p *dim.* pp

2 p *dim.* pp

Vibrafono

p *dim.* pp *l.v.*

Celesta

molto p 2

Arpa

p *dim.* pp ppp 2

$\text{♩} = 58$ 20 *con massima debolezza*

Violini I

1 ppp

2 ppp

Violini II

ord. p *dim.* pp ppp

Viole

ord. p *dim.* pp ppp

Contrabbassi

1 arco (l'estensione accordata al mi-bemolle) ppp

2 arco ppp

Paulo do Nascimento Brito 35